

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology employed in this study. It describes six parts of research procedures: the research method, setting and participants, data collection, data analysis, and research schedule.

A. Research Design

This study used a qualitative design with a narrative inquiry. This study uses a narrative inquiry research design, which focuses on exploring and understanding a person's experience through the stories they tell. According to Barkhuizen (2013), narrative inquiry in language education focuses on exploring teachers' and learners' stories as a way of understanding how they construct meaning from their experiences within specific educational and social contexts. Narrative inquiry emphasizes that experience is expressed and interpreted through stories, which reveal beliefs, practices, identity, and professional development. This approach is suitable for exploring the English teacher experience because it highlights how the participant narrates and makes sense of her pedagogical actions and decisions. In this research, narrative inquiry is used to capture the English teacher journey in implementing GBL, including the process, challenges, benefits, and lessons learned throughout the implementation.

Although this study adopts a narrative inquiry approach, thematic analysis is employed to organize and interpret the participant's stories by identifying significant patterns across her experiences. As suggested by Barkhuizen (2013), narrative data can be analyzed thematically to explore common meanings and experiences embedded in participant stories. Therefore, thematic analysis is considered suitable for examining how the teacher constructs and reflects upon her experiences in implementing GBL.

B. Focus of the Research

This research focuses on exploring the experiences of an English teacher in implementing GBL in the junior high school context. The focus of this study is directed towards understanding the teacher's experiential journey, which includes the implementation process, challenges, benefits, and lessons learned during the

teaching practice. In line with the research problem formulation, this study aims to describe how teachers interpret their experiences in applying GBL in the classroom. The focus of the research is not only on what the teacher does, but also on how the teacher reflects on those experiences and adjusts their teaching practices over time.

To provide a deeper understanding, teachers' experiences are interpreted through the perspective of Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory, which includes concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This framework helps organize and explain the development of teacher experiences during the GBL implementation process.

C. Research Setting and Participant

This study was conducted at a public junior high school in Tasikmalaya Regency, West Java, Indonesia. At this school, English is taught as a compulsory subject. The learning process follows the emancipated curriculum, which emphasizes student-centered learning, creativity, and innovation in teaching practices. This curriculum encourages teachers to design more interactive learning activities, including the use of games and technology-based media to support English language learning.

The participant in this study is a 45-year-old female English teacher with approximately 18 years of teaching experience, currently teaching in ninth grade at junior high school, but she has also taught seventh and eighth grades. Her professional journey began in 2007 after she completed her Bachelor's degree (S1) in Education Management in 2006. At the beginning of her career, the participant was an ICT teacher at a junior high school for around two years. This early experience equipped her with basic skills in the use of learning technology, even though at that time learning was still dominated by conventional approaches.

Along with his professional journey, the participant also continued his education to the Master's (S2) level in the English Education Study Program from 2016 to around 2018 through a study permit. This academic experience strengthened her pedagogical and reflective foundations, particularly in viewing English language learning not only as mastery of material but also as a process closely related to student motivation, engagement, and learning experiences.

The uniqueness of the participant in this study lies in the interrelationship between her professional and academic journeys, which influence each other. Her initial background as an ICT teacher gave them the confidence to explore technology-based learning media, while her further education in English Language Education shaped her views on the importance of meaningful, contextual, and student-centered learning. The shift from traditional learning to GBL, including the use of digital games, was also influenced by the implementation of the emancipated curriculum, which encourages innovation and creativity in learning.

During her teaching career, the participant was assigned to a school in a rural area with limited facilities and low student motivation. In this context, she initially implemented simple, traditional games in an effort to increase student engagement. After being transferred to a school in the district center with higher academic standards and a more diverse student background, the participant began to develop more varied GBL practices, including the use of digital games such as Quizizz and Interacty. This change in school context gave her the opportunity to observe differences in student characteristics while evaluating the effectiveness of the learning strategies she implemented.

Although the implementation of GBL does not always run smoothly due to limitations in facilities, students' readiness, and the adaptation of games to learning objectives, participant actively reflect on her experiences and make continuous adjustments. Her willingness to participate in this study was based on her desire to share her experiences as an English teacher who continues to learn, adapt, and increase student motivation and enthusiasm through the implementation of GBL in the classroom.

D. Data Collection

This study employed semi-structured interviews to collect the data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Indonesian, allowing the researcher to focus on the topic of interest and the construction of teacher professional identity, while also providing the researcher and participant with autonomy to explore relevant ideas that might arise during the interviews. The interviews were conducted face-to-face so that participants could more freely recount their

experiences, express their emotions naturally, and allow researchers to observe nonverbal clues that support a deeper and more accurate understanding of the teachers' narratives. It is also supported by Bearman (2019) that semi-structured interviews can make better use of the knowledge-producing potential of dialogues and have been used since they give the researcher and participant the freedom to explore any relevant ideas that may come up during the interview, while allowing the researcher to concentrate on the topic of interest and the creation of teachers' professional identities. The questions that were asked of the participant were adapted from the Experiential Learning Theory by Kolb (1984), which consists of four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. To ensure clarity and depth of data, interviews were conducted in two sessions. The second interview served as a follow-up interview to confirm, clarify, and expand on statements from the first interview. This follow-up session also functioned as a member-checking process, allowing the participant to verify that the researcher's interpretations accurately reflected their experiences. That also helped to minimize researcher subjectivity and enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Furthermore, the follow-up interview allowed the researcher to reduce potential misunderstandings and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the teacher's experiences in implementing GBL.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed triangulation by incorporating supporting documents such as a teaching module and photographs. This approach enabled the researcher to cross-check interview data with documentary evidence, thereby strengthening the credibility of the findings. As stated by Valencia (2022), triangulation by combining two or more data collection methods strengthens research by combining the same data from different perspectives, reducing bias, and increasing confidence in interpretation.

E. Data Analysis

Data analysis is the next stage after data collection. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This qualitative analytical process involves finding, examining, and presenting themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The six separate phases of the analysis procedure were as follows:

1. Familiarizing with the Data

In this initial phase, the researcher immersed herself in the collected data to gain a deep understanding of the participant's narrative. The process began by transcribing the audio-recorded interviews into written form. After transcription, the researcher read and re-read the transcripts carefully to fully comprehend the teacher's stories about her experiences in implementing GBL in a junior high school.

During these repeated readings, attention was paid to important processes, challenges, benefits, and lessons learned related to her professional journeys. The researcher also made some initial notes on ideas that emerged from participant experiences in implementing GBL. This step allowed the researchers to gain a deep understanding of the participants' narratives before proceeding to the coding process.

2. Generating Initial Codes

In this second stage, initial codes were generated to label meaningful and relevant segments of interview data related to teacher experiences in implementing GBL. At this stage, researchers analyzed transcripts and identified key statements reflecting the processes, challenges, benefits, and lessons learned. To facilitate data organization, a color coding technique was applied. Through this step, separate parts of the teacher stories began to be organized into meaningful units of analysis. An illustration of the initial coding process is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Generating Initial Code

Statement	Initial Code
This is also seen in the students' condition during class, from their low motivation to learn to their low enthusiasm.	Students' Low Motivation in Learning English
The students' comprehension is also limited, so their understanding of what we convey is also limited.	Students' Limited Understanding of Learning English
Seeking ways and solutions to get students interested in learning English and help them understand it.	Adjusting Instructional Strategies
We used traditional methods at the beginning of the learning process, using	Using Traditional Games in Early Teaching Practice

games.	
We are gradually transitioning from traditional to digital. And when it comes to digital, we are not immediately going for high-end solutions—no. We are still using simple, basic.	Transitioning to Digital Game-Based Learning
At that time, out of thirty students, only two responded to the game during the lesson.	Students' Limited Learning Engagement
Every student has a different understanding.	Different Understanding Levels
When they have games, they become even more active.	Promoting Learning Engagement
We combine the students who are at the upper, lower, and middle levels we combine them into one group.	Using Mixed-Ability Grouping Strategies
First, as a trial run. For the next meeting, since we are currently in the improvement phase, we can then look for other ways to support it.	Developing and Applying Gradual Strategies in GBL Implementation
With that game traditional game, students learn more effectively and are more engaged in the learning process. Starting with the discussions, the students begin to engage more deeply.	Observing Student Learning Engagement
A combination of traditional and digital game elements all at the same time.	Developing a Hybrid Game-Based Learning Model
With the game, students can more easily grasp and understand various topics that are considered difficult.	Improving Students' Understanding
Network problems. Either the power supply or the internet connection is down.	Technical Issues in Implementing GBL
Through the game, their motivation increases, making learning more effective and helping them become more engaged in the learning process. Starting with the discussions.	Increasing Students' Motivation
The challenge with non-digital activities or traditional Game-Based Learning (GBL) in the classroom is the limited learning media we have available.	Recognizing Challenges in Traditional GBL Implementation

The interview data revealed several important aspects of teachers'

experiences in implementing GBL in EFL classrooms. Based on the second phase of Braun and Clarke's (2019) thematic analysis, namely the formation of initial codes, the researcher identified 16 key codes that represent recurring patterns related to the implementation process, challenges, benefits, and lessons learned, especially in terms of student motivation and engagement. These codes, along with their frequency in the interview, are presented in the table below.

Table 2. List of Initial Codes and Their Frequency

No.	Initial Code	Frequency
1.	Students' Low Motivation in Learning English	3
2.	Students' Limited Understanding of Learning English	2
3.	Adjusting Instructional Strategies	3
4.	Using Traditional Games in Early Teaching Practice	3
5.	Transitioning to Digital Game-Based Learning	2
6.	Students' Limited Learning Engagement	3
7.	Different Understanding Levels	4
8.	Promoting Learning Engagement	3
9.	Using Mixed-Ability Grouping Strategies	2
10.	Developing and Applying Gradual Strategies in GBL Implementation	3
11.	Observing Student Learning Engagement	2
12.	Developing a Hybrid Game-Based Learning Model	4
13.	Improving Students' Understanding	5
14.	Technical Issues in Implementing GBL	4
15.	Increasing Students' Motivation	2
16.	Recognizing Challenges in Traditional GBL Implementation	3
Total		48

3. Searching for the Themes

The next step in the analysis is to search for themes. At this stage, the codes that were previously created are reviewed and interpreted to identify meaningful patterns and connections across the data. These codes are then organized into coherent themes that represent the journey of teacher experiences in implementing GBL, including the processes, challenges, benefits, and lessons learned. These themes also reflect the dynamic development from initial classroom challenges to reflection, adaptation, and the development of instructional practices. To deepen the analysis, these themes are interpreted through Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), which includes concrete

experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

Table 3. Searching for themes

Initial Codes	Potential Themes
Students' Low Motivation in Learning English	Students' low affective in traditional learning
Students' Limited Learning Engagement	
Students' Limited Understanding in Learning English	Cognitive Obstacles in traditional learning
Different Understanding Levels	
Using Traditional Games in Early Teaching Practice	Early Game-Based Learning Practices
Recognizing Challenges in Traditional GBL Implementation	Reflective Learning Transition
Observing Student Learning Engagement	
Adjusting Instructional Strategies	Games Suitability Adjustment
Developing and Applying Gradual Strategies in GBL Implementation	
Using Mixed-Ability Grouping Strategies	
Transitioning to Digital Game-Based Learning	Transitioning Game-Based Learning Practices
Technical Issues in Implementing GBL	Game-Based Learning
Developing a Hybrid Game-Based Learning Model	Practices Development
Increasing Students' Motivation	The Affective Impact of GBL Implementation
Promoting Learning Engagement	
Improving Students' Understanding	The Cognitive Impact of GBL Implementation

4. Reviewing Themes

The next step involves reviewing the themes that have been identified. At this stage, each theme is reviewed to ensure that it is internally coherent, clearly defined, and distinct from one another, without overlapping concepts. Minor refinements are made to clarify the scope and focus of each theme as well as to enhance the overall coherence of the thematic structure. However, no themes are merged or discarded, as all the identified themes consistently reflect the data and align with the research questions and theoretical framework. Therefore, the final set of themes is retained for further analysis and discussion.

Table 4. Reviewing themes

Potential Themes	Themes
Students' low affective in traditional learning Cognitive Obstacles in Traditional Learning Early Game-Based Learning Practices Reflective Learning Transition	Encountering Challenges in Traditional Learning Reflecting on Students' Responses to Early GBL Implementation
Games Suitability Adjustment	Adjusting Games Suitability in GBL Implementation
Transitioning Game-Based Learning Practices Game-Based Learning Practices Development	Developing GBL Implementation
The Affective Impact of GBL Implementation The Cognitive Impact of GBL Implementation	Optimizing the GBL Implementation Impact

5. Defining and Naming Themes

The final themes were properly defined and named to facilitate the understanding of the findings.

Table 5. Defining and Naming Themes

Initial Codes	Potential Themes	Themes	Definition
Students' Low Motivation in Learning English Students' Limited Learning Engagement Students' Limited Understanding of Learning English Different Understanding Levels Using Traditional Games in Early Teaching Practice	- Students' low affective in traditional learning - Cognitive Obstacles in Traditional Learning - Early Game-Based Learning Practices	Encountering Challenges in Traditional Learning	This theme discusses a teacher early experiences in implementing GBL, focusing on the learning challenges faced by students and the early implementation traditional GBL.

Recognizing Challenges in Traditional GBL Implementation Observing Student Learning Engagement	Reflective Learning Transition	Reflecting on Students' Responses to Early GBL Implementation	This theme focuses on the teacher reflection on traditional GBL implementation through recognizing challenges in traditional GBL and observing student engagement.
Adjusting Instructional Strategies Developing and Applying Gradual Strategies in GBL Implementation Using Mixed-Ability Grouping Strategies	Games Suitability Adjustment	Designing Effective Strategies for GBL Implementation	This theme focuses on how teacher design new learning strategies for GBL based on their previous experiences and reflections.
Transitioning to Digital Game-Based Learning Technical Issues in Implementing GBL Developing a Hybrid Game-Based Learning Model	- Transitioning Game-Based Learning Practices - GBL Practices Development	Advancing GBL Practices	This theme focuses on teacher efforts in the transition from traditional to digital Game-Based Learning (GBL) strategies in practice, and their hopes for developing a hybrid model that combines various approaches for future learning.
Increasing Students' Motivation Promoting Learning Engagement Improving Students' Understanding	- The Affective Impact of GBL Implementation - The Cognitive Impact of GBL	Optimizing the GBL Implementation on Impact	This theme focuses on the impact of GBL on students' understanding and enhances students' engagement through interactive activities.

6. Producing the Report

In the final phase of thematic analysis, the researcher produced an analytical report by selecting and presenting representative quotes from

participant narratives that capture the essence of each theme. These quotes were carefully chosen to illustrate teacher experiences in implementing GBL, highlighting the processes, challenges, benefits, and lessons learned throughout teaching practice. The findings were systematically organized and explained in the results and discussion chapters, where they were interpreted in relation to the research questions and the relevant theoretical framework.

This study uses a thematic analysis approach that is largely inductive, as the themes are derived from data through participant life experiences. However, this analysis is also guided by a theoretical lens, particularly Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory (1984), to provide a deeper understanding of teacher experiential journey. Therefore, although the coding and theme development are based on data, the interpretation of findings is guided by the stages of experiential learning, namely concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This combined approach allows the study to remain data-driven while also offering meaningful theoretical insights into teacher experiences in implementing GBL.

F. Research Schedule

The research time in question is the time span for the implementation of the research as outlined in the form of a table, as follows:

Table 6. Research Schedule

No	Activities	Sep - Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
		2025			2026				
1.	Research Proposal Writing								
2.	Research Proposal Examination								
3.	Data Collection								
4.	Data Analysis								
5.	Comprehensive								

examination		
6.	Final Thesis Examination	